12: Douglas T-3 (1951)1953 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

:92

Bakula is a Yellow Sect lama whose soul has been traced back beyond Buddha.

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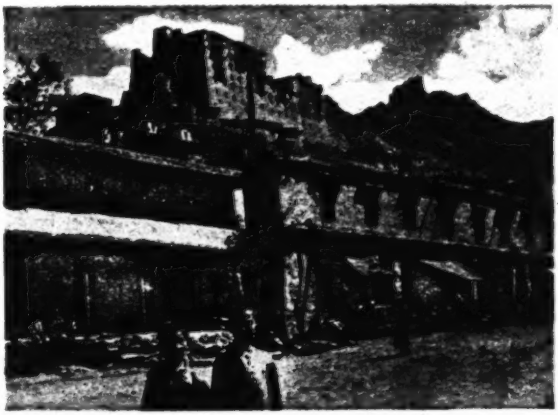
The Ladakhis are poor people—poor in the strictest sense in which we use the word.

• 341



The castle of the King of Ladakh still stands. But it is today empty—filled with cobwebs, bats, and the memories of an ancient power that events have transferred to other hands.

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Zila played the daps and sang of love in a sad and melancholy voice.

[facing p. 192]

• 341

Leh is the ancient capital of Ladakh, with narrow, winding streets made for caravans, not cars.

Jigmet, the headman of Upshi, is the richest man in the village.

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Efacing p. 19

shall try to show why in some cases polyandry is fraternal, and in others non-fraternal.

The province of Ladak, which I visited, is inhabited by Tibetans speaking an ancient form of the language. Tibet, of course, is run by the Lamaist church and the head of the country is the Dalai Lama. The former kings of Tibet have taken refuge in Ladak since the 8th century A. D. and live in the castle of Leh. The town is very characteristic of Tibetan towns. Flat-roofed houses are very well built on the side of high mountains. The altitude is 12,000 feet, the entire area is snowed in during the winter, and the people live mostly in their houses and do not go out.

These Tibetan houses are not very different from our own western type of houses, except in one respect. The kitchen here has no chimney, so it can be imagined how much smoke fills the room when they cook. The Tibetans do not seem to mind; though we personally found it very difficult to stand upright in their kitchens when they were cooking and so spent most of our time there on all fours, to avoid the smoke and keep our eyes from watering. The people suffer from eye trouble because of this practice and yet they seem to stick to it in a very curious manner.

The characteristic dress of the Ladak women is of red cloth such as the men wear. They have a sheepskin toga which they throw over their shoulders and a very characteristic head-dress, made of a piece of red felt with two enormous ears of black wool. The red felt band is studded with turquoises at the back, family heirlooms, handed down from mother to daughter. Such a headdress is known as a *perak*.

The men are tough-looking. They very often have their right shoulders bare; though sometimes they have a Chinese shirt thrown over them. When they are working, they usually have the right shoulder uncovered, however cold the weather may be. Looking at Tibetan children, one could imagine at first sight

WT 838 181 595 But local Europeans who know the Tibetans very well, such as the Moravian missionaries who live among them in the western part of Tibet, explain that, on the whole, they are not very passionate people, but rather cold. Certainly, their polyandrous institution has much to do with the repression of their natural feelings.

WT 719 595 174 Oddly enough, the Buddhist religion condemns not only polygyny and divorce, but also polyandry, and yet all Tibetans who are Buddhists practise it. Thus, it must be a pre-Buddhist custom. The Moslems, however (that is, those Tibetans who are converted to Mohammedanism) cease being polyandrous immediately and take to the Islamic polygynous system.

Ti 595 341 WT 341 There exists a very rare case of polyandry in Tibet which it has not yet been my privilege to come across, but of which I heard repeatedly in western Tibet. It is practised in a society which I understand exists in central Tibet around Lhasa and Gyantse. In these towns, the fathers and sons share one wife. One of the objects of my returning now, at the end of the year, to Tibet, is to meet a woman who is thus married to both father and sons. Such a [104] woman is known in Tibetan as a *tchama-doong*, which means "beam-mother-beam" a name derived from an analogy in the build of their houses. These have flat roofs, built over a number of beams, large transversal beams and others, which are smaller, going across them, and very small bits of wood which link the two together. When they call such a woman a *tchama-doong*, they mean she is comparable to a small beam, that she links the big beam with the small bits.

Ti 595 587 It must not be imagined for a minute, of course, that this woman is the mother of the sons. But let us assume the case of a family in which there are a number of brothers, who have married one woman and have a number of offspring. If this mother dies, the fathers can either remarry and, in this case, the sons are entitled to share the stepmother with their fathers, or, if the sons are married when the mother dies, the fathers, instead of remarrying, are

1: Drew G-3 (1862-1872) 1875 AV1 Kashmir
w Tibetans A14

the fields, or now and then in separate plantations. But the growth is not enough to supply all that is wanted. When the new bazaar at Leh was built, a great old plantation belonging to the chief monastery was felled for the purpose, nothing approaching to which is now to be seen in the country. The difficulty in the way of plantations seems to be that there is required for them positions advantageous in point of soil and water which are already occupied by crops; one can hardly increase the growth of timber without diminishing the breadth of land tilled, and of that there is none too much. 313

The houses are built of sun-dried bricks or of stone. They are flat-roofed, of two or three stories, but these all very low. Except in the very poorest houses there is always a reception room kept neat and clean, the rest not having this character. When a visitor comes they carpet this room with felts, and do all they can to make him and his attendants comfortable. The houses are all whitewashed, the aspect of them—perhaps among groups of trees, or else standing out in relief from the sombre rock on which they may be built, rising one behind the other on the face of it—with their verandah-rooms or with balconies projecting, is often bright and pleasant. The houses of people of the higher ranks have an oratory for the practice of the Buddhist religious ceremonies. 342 [576]

The palace at Leh is probably the finest building in the country, though some of the monasteries may approach it. This palace is curiously contrived. The arrangement of the rooms is very irregular; they are not in continuous stories, but are at all sorts of levels, connected by narrow and low passages. There are two or three large reception rooms, some of them with an opening to the sky in the centre, this plan allowing of a large fire burning in winter on the floor of the room. The roofs of these large rooms were supported by columns with the wide-extending head or capital which is so marked a feature in Indian architecture; the columns, and indeed most of the wood-work, were gaily coloured, and on the walls were painted sacred pictures. 344 [341] [353]